PR
6025
M1848w

A
000 549 702
9
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

Aspida Haine-Forster
1927

THE WITCH-MAID & OTHER VERSES

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/witchmaidotherve00mackiala

THE WITCH-MAID
&
OTHER VERSES

DOROTHEA MACKELLAR

1914
LONDON AND TORONTO
J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

PR
6025
M1848w

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

About a third of these poems have appeared before in a volume published in Australia; several in *The Spectator* and *The Sydney Bulletin*, and a few elsewhere. I have to thank the editors for permission to reprint.

1364916

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Witch-Maid	9
The Colours of Light	14
From a Town Window	17
The Santa Maria	19
"Sumer is icumen in"	21
Night on the Plains	24
Settlers	25
My Country	29
Swallows	32
Fire	34
High Places	35
The Closed Door	37
Reminder	40
Culgai Paddock	41
Canticle	43
March Winds	46
Colour	47
Non Penso a Lei	50
The Road to Ronda	52
The Moon and the Morning	54

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Flower and Thorn	56
The Grey Lake	58
Burning Off	61
An Old Song	63
Bazar	64
Spring on the Plains	66
Pilgrim Song	68
The Coorong Sandhills	69
Two Japanese Songs:	
I. The Heart of a Bird	71
II. A Smoke Song	72
An Afterglow on the Nile	73
The Explorer	75
September	77
Riding Rhyme	80
Four Translations from the German	82
Château d'Espagne	86
Bathing Rhyme	88
Montoro's Song	93
Sea-Fog	95
Sorrow	96
Seagull	97

THE WITCH-MAID
AND OTHER VERSES

THE WITCH-MAID

I WANDERED in the woodland a morning in the spring,
I found a glade I had not known, and saw an evil thing.

I heard a wood-dove calling, as one that loves and grieves,
The sun was shining silver on the small bright leaves,
O it was very beautiful, the glade that I had found!
I peeped between the slender stems, and there upon the ground
A man was lying dead, and from the spear-wound in his side
The sluggish blood had ceased to flow, and yet had hardly dried.

O the shining of the leaves,
The morning of the year!
O how could any die to-day, with life so young and dear?

My feet were tied with horror, I could not turn to run;
A light breeze tossed the branches, the shadow and the sun
Across the dead face shifted—it seemed to change and twitch—
When from the trees beyond me stepped a white young witch.

I prayed that I was hidden, she never turned her head,
But picked her footsteps daintily and stooped beside the dead;
She touched him with her hanging hair and stroked him with her hand,
Still gazing like a little child that does not understand,
For she had strayed from Elfland where death has never come,
She knew not why his side was torn nor why his mouth was dumb.

She sat her down beside him and joined her finger-tips
And smiled a strange and secret smile that curved her thin red lips;
She wore a veil of purple about her body sweet
And little silver sandals on her smooth pale feet;
Her black hair hung as straight as rain and touched the dead man's eyes,
He smiled at her in answer, a scornful smile and wise.

She played with him awhile as might a panther-kitten play,
Most horrible it was, and yet I could not look away—
I needs must watch her motions, her cruel, supple grace,
The delicate swift changes of her sharp-cut face;
Till suddenly she wearied, and rising from her knees
All in one lovely movement like a sapling in the breeze,
She gazed on him who would not play, with gathering surprise—
The man she did not understand, though she was very wise—

She drew her veil around her, her whiteness showing through,
And gazed; and still unceasingly there came the wood-dove's coo.

O the stirring of the spring,
The calling of the dove!
Why does he lie so cold, so cold, when I am here to love?

Her long strange eyes were narrowed to threads of shining green,
She touched the broken spear-point the wound's red lips between,
She touched it with her careless foot, and yet he did not stir,
Dull fool that lay with open eyes and would not look at her!

She turned away in anger and raised her arms on high,
Her straight white arms that questioned the pure pale sky,

The thousand slender tree-stems soon hid the way she went
As they who hold a secret and therewith are content.
The dead man smiled in silence; a strange thought in me said,
If I had heard her speak at all then I too should be dead:
Her voice—what would her voice be?—and then I fled, afraid,
The spell was loosed that bound me to the evil glade.

O the flowers in the grass,
The wood-dove in the tree;
From magic and from sudden death, Good Lord deliver me!

THE COLOURS OF LIGHT

This is not easy to understand
For you that come from a distant land
Where all the colours are low in pitch—
Deep purples, emeralds deep and rich,
Where autumn's flaming and summer's green—
Here is a beauty you have not seen.

All is pitched in a higher key,
Lilac, topaz, and ivory,
Palest jade-green and pale clear blue
Like aquamarines that the sun shines through,
Golds and silvers, we have at will—
Silver and gold on each plain and hill,
Silver-green of the myall leaves,
Tawny gold of the garnered sheaves,
Silver rivers that silent slide,
Golden sands by the water-side,

THE COLOURS OF LIGHT

Golden wattle, and golden broom,
Silver stars of the rosewood bloom;
Amber sunshine, and smoke-blue shade:
Opal colours that glow and fade;
On the gold of the upland grass
Blue cloud-shadows that swiftly pass;
Wood-smoke blown in an azure mist;
Hills of tenuous amethyst. . . .

Oft the colours are pitched so high
The deepest note is the cobalt sky;
We have to wait till the sunset comes
For shades that feel like the beat of drums
Or like organ notes in their rise and fall—
Purple and orange and cardinal,
Or the peacock-green that turns soft and slow
To peacock-blue as the great stars show. . . .

Sugar-gum boles flushed to peach-blow pink;
Blue-gums, tall at the clearing's brink;

Ivory pillars, their smooth fine slope
Dappled with delicate heliotrope;
Grey of the twisted mulga-roots;
Golden-bronze of the budding shoots;
Tints of the lichens that cling and spread,
Nile-green, primrose, and palest red. . . .

Sheen of the bronze-wing; blue of the crane;
Fawn and pearl of the lyrebird's train;
Cream of the plover; grey of the dove—
These are the hues of the land I love.

AUSTRALIA.

FROM A TOWN WINDOW

From my high-jutting window in town
Looking down,
The lights constellated burn steady and far;
The purple skies meet with the dark at my feet,
I hardly can tell which is lamp and which star.

And the tall sombre buildings that rise
Near my eyes
Where one lighted window shines gold in the dark,
Unsubstantial show, that I see them as though
I could walk through the walls without leaving a mark.

And the purring and murmurous choir
Of the wire

That leads the chained lightning a slave through the
street,
In the night-stillness comes like the throbbing of drums,
Like the distant, dread sound of innumerable feet.

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.

THE SANTA MARIA

THREE green miles beneath the sea
Lies the spoil we could not hold,
Lies the galleon with her gold.
Fish brush by her weed-hung side;
Never wave can shake her, she
Has gone through them far too deep,
And her crew may rest asleep
In the places where they died.

There each man unheeding lies
As he was the night she sank;
Even the cups from which they drank,
Even the dice which they had cast
—For we took them by surprise—
Lie beside their long white bones;
Flagons set with precious stones
Count for little at the last.

When she sank there in our sight
With a little lapping sound,
Slight as if a skiff had drowned,
Staggering we turned to go,
For our ship had felt the fight;
Out to sunset showed our wake,
Writhing like a wounded snake,
Till we came to Samballo. . . .

Shapeless sea-beasts coil and creep
On her rotting cedar deck,
Past her crew who little reck
Of the trespass, if they know.
Mary, give them happy sleep!
Surely there beneath the wave
They have found as green a grave
As the sun-warmed earth can show.

"SUMER IS ICUMEN IN"

The beautiful old simple songs
That make us laugh and cry,
That sing of dying loveliness
In words that cannot die:

Of how the singer's love was sweet
Or how she was unkind,
And how her lips were red that now
Are dust upon the wind:

Of how the fields were gold in May
With daffodils a-row,
And all the birds made holiday
Six hundred years ago:—

These, when the beauty of the spring
  Clad in this alien dress
Turns like a sharp sword in our hearts
  For utter loveliness,

And joy and sorrow intermixed
  Run tingling through our veins—
These bring more peace and comfort still
  Than newer, subtler strains.

Oh, quarrion for missel-thrush
  And rosewood bloom for may!
The things the nameless singer saw
  Are what we see to-day.

The grass is just as green to-day,
  The distant hill as blue,
The birds are just as glad as then,
  The lovers just as true;

"SUMER IS ICUMEN IN"

And Alisoun is dead long syne
With him that called her fair,
But love is just as sweet and fresh
When spring is in the air;

And though I must perforce be dumb
Who have no skill to sing,
I am as deep in love, in love,
As is the year in spring!

AUSTRALIA.

NIGHT ON THE PLAINS

Out on the plain-land at night
  There is no sound, not a sigh,
And nothing is moving now
  But scornful stars in the sky:

The night is too great for my heart,
  It flutters and halts and trips;
The terrible mirth of the stars
  Has slain my song on my lips.

AUSTRALIA.

SETTLERS

If the gods of Hellas do not tread our shaggy mountains,
Stately, white-and-golden, with unfathomable eyes,
Yet the lesser spirits haunt our forests and our fountains,
Seas and green-brown river-pools no thirsty summer dries.

Never through the tangled scrub we see Diana glisten,
Silver-limbed and crescent-crowned and swift to hear and turn,
When the chase is hottest and the woods are waked to listen,
While her maidens follow running knee-deep in the fern.

Of the great gods only Pan walks hourly here—Pan only,
In the warm dark gullies, in the thin clear upland air,

On the windy sea-cliffs and the plains apart and lonely,
By the tingling silence you may know that he is there.

But the sea-nymphs make our shores shine gay with light
and laughter,
At the sunset when the waves are mingled milk and fire
You may see them very plain, and in the darkness after
You may hear them singing with the stars' great golden
choir.

When the earth is mad with song some blue September
morning,
In the grove of myall trees that rustle green and grey,
Through the plumes of trailing leaves hung meet for her
adorning,
See a dark-browed Dryad peep and swiftly draw away.

In the deep-cut river beds set thick with moss-grown
boulders
Where the wagtails come to drink and balance lest they
fall,

SETTLERS

You may see the gleaming of a Naiad's slippery
shoulders,
And the water sliding cool and quiet over all.

Through the narrow gorges where the flying-foxes
muster,
Hanging from the kurrajongs like monstrous magic
grapes,
Something spreads a sudden fear that breaks each
heavy cluster—
See the furry prick-eared faun that chuckles and
escapes!

Marble-smooth and marble-pale the blue gums guard the
clearing
Where the winter fern is gold among the silver grass,
And the shy bush creatures watching bright-eyed and
unfearing
See the slender Oreads while we unheeding pass.

SETTLERS

Wreathed with starry clematis these tread the grassy spaces
When the moon sails up beyond the highest screening tree,
All the forest dances, and the furthest hidden places
Are astir with beauty—but we may not often see.

When came they to harbour here, the shy folk peering, flying?
Long before our coast showed blue to Poncé de León
Pan beheld a vision of an empty kingdom lying
Waiting—and he led them past the seas to claim his own.

AUSTRALIA.

MY COUNTRY

The love of field and coppice,
Of green and shaded lanes,
Of ordered woods and gardens
Is running in your veins;
Strong love of grey-blue distance,
Brown streams and soft, dim skies—
I know but cannot share it,
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains;
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror—
The wide brown land for me!

MY COUNTRY

The tragic ring-barked forests
  Stark white beneath the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains,
  The hot gold hush of noon.
Green tangle of the brushes
  Where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree tops
  And ferns the crimson soil.

Core of my heart, my country!
  Her pitiless blue sky,
When sick at heart, around us
  We see the cattle die—
But then the grey clouds gather
  And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
  The steady, soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country!
  Land of the Rainbow Gold,

MY COUNTRY

For flood and fire and famine
  She pays us back threefold
Over the thirsty paddocks,
  Watch, after many days,
The filmy veil of greenness
  That thickens as we gaze.

An opal-hearted country,
  A wilful, lavish land—
All you who have not loved her,
  You will not understand—
Though earth holds many splendours,
  Wherever I may die,
I know to what brown country
  My homing thoughts will fly.

AUSTRALIA.

SWALLOWS

WHAT tells the swallows that a house is in the making,
Far away from any town, among the whispering leaves?
Saying, "Good news, a home! Fly there when spring is waking,
There'll be room for many nests beneath those shady eaves."

With the first springtime come the swallows without number,
Chattering in the greying dawn, and like a flying cloud
Sweeping round the roof at dusk before they sink to slumber—
How did they scent the new-built home from out the city's crowd?

SWALLOWS

Was it a wild bush-bird that brought the message townwards?
No, she would not leave the lonely gully where she sings.
Maybe the swans' black vanguard told it, crying downwards,
Or vagrant winds blew past and caught its new smoke on their wings.

Whoso the message brought, they knew, O do not doubt it,
Swift they flew by plain and ridge, like arrows straight and sure
Aimed for the home, to build their little homes about it,
That shall stand while stands the roof and while the walls endure.

AUSTRALIA.

FIRE

This life that we call our own
Is neither strong nor free:
A flame in the wind of death
It trembles ceaselessly.

And this is all we can do—
To use our little light
Before, in the piercing wind,
It flickers into night.

To yield the heat of the flame,
To grudge not, but to give
Whatever we have of strength
That one more flame may live.

HIGH PLACES

My heart turns to the mountains
That I so long have missed,
The blue hills on the sky-line,
Bird-haunted, sunshine-kissed;
For in my soul I see them,
The gullies golden-green
Where from the hop-vine tangle
The bellbird chimes unseen.

And higher yet and higher
I want to climb, until
The trees give place to bushes
Wind-shorn and struggling still
For foothold on the corries
Steep-sloping to the sky,
I want to reach the summit
And watch the clouds race by;—

HIGH PLACES

The clouds that go so quickly
The whole hill seems to lean;—
I want to breathe in deeply
The cool air, thin and keen.
My heart turns to high places
All men have long adored—
The proud and lonely mountains,
The Altars of the Lord.

AUSTRALIA.

THE CLOSED DOOR

As we crossed Alcántara
With the Tagus falling,
I was 'ware there came a voice
At my shoulder calling.
As we climbed the steep red path—
Red as smouldering ember—
" You, you know this well," it said,
" *Do you not remember ?* "

Up the narrow cobbled streets
Still it followed after,
Whispering deeds that we had shared
With a fierce low laughter.
" Here you stabbed him and he fell
With his sword a-clatter—

Life for life—you paid your debt—
That was no great matter."

Through the Gate that Wamba built
Still the voice pursuing
Softly called, " We know it all,
All that you are doing.
Every stone you're treading now
You have known aforetime,
You have seen these grim red walls
In the stress of wartime.

" You remember? Down this lane
You would often swagger
With your comrades of the mask,
Cloak and sword and dagger.
At that window high she stood,
Some dear dead Dolores . . .
You've forgotten—and so soon?
—There are other stories. . . ."

THE CLOSED DOOR

By the white Church of the Kings,
By the proud red towers,
Thronging round about me came
Ghosts of long-dead hours;
Ghosts of many a blazing June,
Many a keen December—
"Thus and thus and thus we did.
Do you not remember?"

TOLEDO, SPAIN.

REMINDER

It's I was sad at parting, but the red heart from my breast
I left you as a token that I would not feast or rest
Without a thought of you to kiss my lips before the wine,
Without a dream of you to stoop and make my sleep divine.

So lest you should forget one word of all the words we said,
My heart, my only jewel, fired with living, pulsing red,
A trinket at your girdle hangs, and as a sign to me
The hungry, aching blank is, where my glad heart used to be.

CULGAI PADDOCK

I KNOW that the tawny grass of the plain
  Is blown like the sea to-day
By the wind that follows the autumn rain
  And chases the clouds away,

And ruffles the winding lagoon, and now
  The sky's blue, dewy and clean,
Will show in the lee where the rushes bow
  Like shattered aquamarine.

To-day, when the cranes in their grey and pink
  Fish solemnly in the weeds,
To-day, when the cattle come down to drink
  And push through the whispering reeds,

CULGAI PADDOCK

I stand there and watch them, in Culgai too,
And they do not heed or fear;
There is not one lark in the radiant blue
Whose carol I do not hear.

This morning the wind on the grasses brown
Blows tingling and sweet and rare;
Now though my body must tarry in town
Thank God that my soul is there!

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.

CANTICLE

For the honey-coloured moon, and the shining host of stars,
And the sun's great golden targe,
And the luminous red leaves of the sapling gums in spring,
And the fen-lake's reed-grown marge:

May'st Thou who mad'st all things to be alive,
Thou who hast given the Senses Five,
Thou who hast portioned the Nights and Days,
Thou who hast given us lips for praise,
Be thanked, Lord God!

For the arrowy swift stream flowing silent in the shade
With its twisting waters green,

CANTICLE

For the spray-dewed slender fern-fronds beside the cataract,
The wet black rocks between:

For the pine-tree like a church-spire, that grows upon the ridge,
For the lizard at its foot
That is quicker than a thought, yea, and greener than the moss
Growing round the great tree's root:

For the ocean stretching dark to the clear horizon-line,
For the one white distant sail,
For the ripple and the crisp and the calmness of the bay
With the tide-lines showing pale:

For the bright-eyed life astir in the grave depths of the bush,
For each glimpse of it we get;
For the pattering of rain when the tree-frogs chant in choir
And the glistening leaves are wet:

CANTICLE

For the sea of tossing horns when the round-up's at an
end,
For the thousand hoofs unshod;
For the blossoms and the bees and the floating butter-
flies
We thank Thee, O Lord God!

May'st Thou who mad'st all things to be alive,
Thou who hast given the Senses Five,
Thou who hast portioned the Nights and Days,
Thou who hast given us lips for praise,
Be thanked, Lord God!

AUSTRALIA.

MARCH WINDS

Winds go streaming, shouting loud,
  At their play around the sky,
And my soul is like a cloud
  Blown about with them on high.

Like a hawk unhooded, she
  From my body broke away,
Longing for the company
  Of the winds at holiday.

So she scours the skiey plain,
  Wheeling, dipping in the blue—
Hawk-soul, cloud-soul, turn again!
  What's the lure to use for you?

Cairo.

COLOUR

The lovely things that I have watched unthinking,
Unknowing, day by day,
That their soft dyes had steeped my soul in colour
That will not pass away:—

Great saffron sunset clouds, and larkspur mountains,
And fenceless miles of plain,
And hillsides golden-green in that unearthly
Clear shining after rain;

And nights of blue and pearl; and long smooth beaches,
Yellow as sunburnt wheat,
Edged with a line of foam that creams and hisses,
Enticing weary feet;

And emeralds, and sunset-hearted opals,
And Asian marble, veined
With scarlet flame; and cool green jade, and moonstones,
Misty and azure-stained;

And almond trees in bloom, and oleanders,
Or a wide purple sea
Of plain-land gorgeous with a lovely poison—
The evil Darling pea:—

If I am tired I call on these to help me
To dream—and dawn-lit skies,
Lemon and pink, or faintest, coolest lilac,
Float on my soothéd eyes.

There is no night so black but you shine through it,
There is no morn so drear,
O Colour of the World, but I can find you,
Most tender, pure, and clear.

Thanks be to God who gave this gift of colour
Which who shall seek shall find;
Thanks be to God who gives me strength to hold it,
Though I were stricken blind.

AUSTRALIA.

NON PENSO A LEI

(*Canzone Ferrandini*)

When I pass by below your window, singing,
Never by any chance I think of you;
And jealousy your hard heart may be wringing—
I go that way because I've work to do.
And if you think, beneath the gay voice throbbing,
You hear the sound of one in sorrow sobbing—
I sing thus since my mood is thus. Believe me,
Madame, no hopeless love of you shall grieve me.

If they have said that I look pale and worn,
Time is at fault, not any woman's scorn.

NON PENSO A LEI

If they have said I daily seek Death's doors,
What's that to you? Am I a love of yours?

But if I see you smiling at Gigi that sweet way,
Then I go to the galleys and you to churchyard clay.

THE ROAD TO RONDA

Along the road to Ronda
Grow rosemary and thyme,
And trails of periwinkle
Among the brambles climb;
But 'tis the broom the paths along
That lifts the traveller's heart to song.

The broom its royal treasure
Spills lavish, far and wide,
No stone but has its banner
Of cloth-of-gold beside,
No weed but bears its nodding plume,
Its careless bravery of bloom.

The purple spears of lavender
Smell sweet as charity,

And amaryllis blossoms
By grey-flowered rosemary;
It's worth a year of suffering
To walk the Ronda road in spring.

There grows a gallant army
Of blossoms great and small
Along the road to Ronda—
The broom is lord of all.
O fair and fair and wonder-fair,
Spilt like the sunshine everywhere!

RONDA, SPAIN.

THE MOON AND THE MORNING

The moon is riding high, the stars are shining
But very palely, through the clear blue light;
The plain is empty, and the circling mountains
Rise cold and far through swathes of mist to-night.

There is no wind astir, the serried rushes
Stand straight as lances round the glassed lagoon;
Within still waters grows a single lily,
A great white flower of solitude, the moon.

My shadow that seemed taller than the mountains
Lies gathered at my feet, a pool of ink,
And as I move towards the sombre reed-beds
I watch it spill and trickle, spread and shrink.

THE MOON AND THE MORNING

Here in the moon-blanched pasture wide and silent
With no voice waking and no foot astir
Save mine, the lovely sleeping night surrounds me
And naught is real save the thought of her.

And yet the plain will wake to green and golden
Within a few still hours; a breath will pass
Crisping the mirror-surface of the water;
The larks will start up from the dewy grass;

The proud far sky will smile and grow more kindly;
The gauzy wisps of cloud that float in it—
The small pale frightened clouds that cast no shadow
Since they dim not the starshine as they flit—

Will mass to eastward like a host with banners,
Dawn's dazzling banners streaming out unfurled
Above the dayspring's golden fountain welling
Up from beneath the dark rim of the world.

FLOWER AND THORN

Black the storm-wind rides the sky, all the leaves are torn,
Briers upon the common stand stripped to stick and thorn;
Thorny is the brier, thorny is the brier,
Mother Mary, keep me safe, give me my desire!

Now the winter rains have gone, Heaven's washed and clean,
All the brooks are laughing sweet, all the trees are green;
Leafy is the brier, leafy is the brier,
Mother Mary in the sky, grant me my desire!

Summer's yellow on the land, throbbing warm and live,
Hear her million voices hum like a lucky hive;

FLOWER AND THORN

Blossom of the brier, blossom of the brier,
Mary in the summertime, give me my desire!

All the talking winds are stilled in the autumn pause,
Redder far than blood or fire blaze the hips and haws;
Fruiting of the brier, fruiting of the brier—
Mother Mary, must I die starved of my desire?

THE GREY LAKE

(*Lake Eyre, South Australia*)

Far away to southward
The grey lake lies,
Thirty leagues of mud, bare
To turquoise skies.

Shallow, sluggish water,
Warm—warm as blood;
Not enough to cover
The quaking mud.

Hot winds drive the water
In summer time
Southward—and behind them
There lies grey slime.

THE GREY LAKE

Forty miles to westward,
  A hundred north,
Wind-fiends hunt the water
  Back—back and forth.

There are reed-grown islands
  The eye scarce sees,
Grey ooze guarding grimly
  Their mysteries.

Strange Things may survive there,
  What, who can tell?
Monsters old—the lake-slime
  Can guard them well.

No one knows those islands,—
  The gulls that fly
May go near, but others
  Would surely die.

THE GREY LAKE

For the wind-scourged water
  Would flee the ships,
And the mud would open
  Her soft smooth lips.

So the isles are sacred
  From alien tread,
Since the slime can swallow
  And keep her dead.

Who can know her secrets?
  The blue sky might—
(Cloudless-hot in daytime,
  Star-gemmed at night).

To and fro for ever
  The water swings,
And the gulls fly over,
  For *they* have wings.

BURNING OFF

THEY'RE burning off at the Rampadells,
The tawny flames uprise
With greedy licking around the trees:
The hot breath sears our eyes

From cores already grown furnace-hot;
The logs are well alight;
We fling more wood where the flameless heart
Is throbbing red and white.

The fire bites deep in that beating heart,
The creamy smoke-wreaths ooze
From cracks and knot-holes along the trunk
To melt in greys and blues.

. . . . . .

BURNING OFF

The young horned moon has gone from the sky,
And night has settled down;
A red glare shows from the Rampadells,
Grim as a burning town.

Full seven fathoms above the rest
A tree stands, great and old,
A red-hot column whence fly the sparks,
One ceaseless shower of gold.

All hail the king of the fire before
He sway and crack and crash
To earth!—for surely to-morrow's sun
Will see him fine white ash.

The king in his robe of falling stars
No trace shall leave behind,
And where he stood with his silent court
The wheat shall bow to the wind.

AN OLD SONG

The almond bloom is overpast, the apple blossoms blow.
I never loved but one man, and I never told him so.

My flowers will never come to fruit, but I have kept my pride—
A little, cold, and lonely thing, and I have naught beside.

The spring-wind caught my flowering dreams, they lightly blew away.
I never had but one true love, and he died yesterday.

BAZAR

Dive in from the sunlight smiting like a falchion
  Underneath the awnings to the sudden shade,
Saunter through the packed lane
                Many-voiced, colourful,
  Rippling with the currents of the south and eastern
    trade.

Here are Persian carpets, ivory, and peachbloom,
  Tints to fill the heart of any child of man;
Here are copper rose-bowls,
                Leopard-skins, emeralds,
  Scarlet slippers curly-toed and beads from Kordofan.

Water-sellers pass with brazen saucers tinkling,
  Hajjis in the doorways tell their amber beads;

BAZAR

Buy a lump of turquoise,
A scimitar, a neckerchief
Worked with rose and saffron for a lovely lady's needs?

Here we pass the goldsmiths, copper-, brass-, and silversmiths,
All a-clang and jingle, all a-glint and gleam;
Here the silken webs hang,
Shimmering, delicate,
Soft-hued as an afterglow and melting as a dream.

Buy a little blue god brandishing a sceptre,
Buy a dove with coral feet and pearly breast;
Buy some ostrich-feathers,
Silver shawls, perfume-jars,
Buy a stick of incense for the shrine that you love best.

ASSUAN.

SPRING ON THE PLAINS

Spring has come to the plains,
And, following close behind,
Green of the welcome rains,
And spice of the first warm wind;
Beating of wings on high,
For, overhead in the blue,
Southward the brolgas fly,
The cranes and pelicans too,
Ibis, and proud black swan—
And quivering cries float clear,
After the birds are gone,
Still lingering in the ear.

Everywhere we pass
The horses tread soft and deep;
Clover and young green grass—
Hark to the grazing sheep,

SPRING ON THE PLAINS

Cropping steady and slow—
A peaceful, satisfied sound;
Thick on the paths we go
Gold flowers are starring the ground.
Spring! and the world's astir,
And everything gives praise,
Singing the strength of her
These lovely lengthening days.

AUSTRALIA.

PILGRIM SONG

My feet are grey with the roadside dust,
  My hair is wet with the dew,
My heart is flagging with weariness
  And faint with the want of you.

You are as young as the breaking buds,
  You are as old as the sea;
My soul burns white in the flame of you—
  Love, open your door to me! . . .

I sought my love in the noontide heat,
  I sought in the bitter wind,
And found her house—and the doors were shut,
  And the windows were barred and blind.

THE COORONG SANDHILLS

(*South Australia*)

Over the Coorong sandhills only the wild duck fly,
Naught is there but the knot-grass rank, and the sea,
and the sky;
Redder than cooling lava, slow heave the hills to the blue,
Splendid, dazzling, and stainless, of sky and of ocean too.

South to the frozen mountains faces the last red hill,
Only the sea between them; almost as lone and still
Shows the sand as the ice-peaks, but it has heat and
light,
Set against the aurora that shatters the polar night.

If the sands have a language, healing it is and kind,
Clean and strong like the sea-roar or the glad shout of
the wind;

THE COORONG SANDHILLS

If you but face them bravely, lost in a barren land,
Never will they betray you, the sky and the sea and
sand.

Blue burns the sky above me, red the sand at my feet,
Near and far on the sandhills shimmers the living heat;
Hill after hill I conquer, changing yet still the same,
Still flows the sand together and covers the way I came.

Stretched in a warm sand-hollow late in the afternoon
Watch I the wild duck flying back to the long lagoon;
Black on an amber sunset passes the last of the flight—
Over the Coorong sandhills quiver the pinions of night.

TWO JAPANESE SONGS

I

THE HEART OF A BIRD

What does the bird-seller know of the heart of a bird?

There was a bird in a cage of gold, a small red bird in a
cage of gold;
The sun shone through the bars of the cage, out of the
wide heaven;
The depths of the sky were soft and blue, greatly to be
longed for.
The bird sang for desire of the sky, and her feathers
shone redder for sorrow;
And many passed in the street below, and they said one
to another:
" Ah, that we had hearts as light as a bird's! "

But what does the passer-by know of the heart of a bird?

What does the bird-seller know of the heart of a bird?

"I have given grain for you to eat and water that you
may bathe."
Shall not this bird be content? is there need to clip her
wings?
No, for her cage is very strong, the golden bars are set close;
Yet the real bird has flown away, very far away over the
rice-fields;
There is only the shadow-body in the cage.

What does the bird-seller care for the heart of a bird?

II

A SMOKE SONG

THERE is a grey plume of smoke on the horizon,
The smoke of a steamer that has departed over the edge
of the world.
There is the smoke of a dying fire in my heart,
The smoke has hurt my eyes, they ache with tears.

AN AFTERGLOW ON THE NILE

Silver and misty rose
And iris-flushed mother-of-pearl
Is the world at the clear day's close,
River and sky and sand:
Into a land we sail
Soft-hued like the dreams of a girl,
Vaguely outlined and bubble-frail—
Into a mystic land.

Speak, and the vision breaks,
Yea, feel but too strongly, it flies
From the tumult its beauty wakes
Deep in our hearts' stronghold;
We can but stand and gaze,
With all our souls' life in our eyes,
As we spin out this day of days
Thin to a thread of gold.

. . . . . .

AN AFTERGLOW

Life has a flagon tall
O'erbrimming with beauty's clear wine,
We only can sip at it all—
If we could lay it by,
Treasure it, hold it fast,
And revel in colour divine
When the grey days come past,
Then we should never die.

That is for gods alone,
For beauty has butterfly wings,
And we never can make it our own,
Bloom unscattered, unless
We are as gods, apart—
And not one of these wonderful things
May I ever set down, though my heart
Break in its helplessness.

THE EXPLORER

Had I been Adam in Eden-glade
I should have climbed the wall
Or ever the Woman found the fruit,
Crimson and ripe to fall.

For though the garden be Paradise,
Gardens are little worth
To one who thirsts for the wilderness
Lonely in all the earth.

So out of the garden greenery
Heavy with jasmine scent
And past the slumbering gentle beasts
I would go forth content.

I'd think of naught save the wall, but gain
  Over the other side
A fair mixed world of evil and good,
  Chancy and wild and wide.

Sorrow and hunger and pain and fear,
  Peace that is won through strife,
The changing luck of the changing year
  Giving its zest to life.

Had *I* been Adam in Eden-close
  Never was wall so high
'Could keep me out of the lean brown earth,
  Though it might reach the sky!

Had I been Adam in Paradise
  I should ha' climbed the wall,
I want not only the sweet of life
  But all—all—all!

SEPTEMBER

The morns are growing misty, the nights are turning
cold,
The linden leaves are falling like a shower of gold;
And over where my heart is, beneath the southern sun,
The shearing's nearly over and the spring's begun.

The crying flocks are driven to feed in peace again,
They stream and spread and scatter on the smooth green
plain,
And in the sky above them the soft spring breezes keep
A flock of clouds as snowy as the new-shorn sheep.

Now later comes the sunshine and sooner comes the
dark,
The barefoot newsboys shiver, the ladies in the Park

Wear furs about their shoulders, for autumn winds are keen,
And rusty curling edges fleck the chestnuts' green.

The mists hang gauzy curtains of pearl and pigeon-blue
Between us and the distance, the street-lamps shining through
Wear each a golden halo diaphanous and fair—
But not one whit more lovely than my own clear air.

More clear than you can dream it, as bright as diamond
It bathes the plains and ridges and the hills beyond,
It bathes the pillared woodlands that ring with bellbird notes,
With mating calls and answers from a thousand throats.

The lamps are lit in London, beneath their searching
light
The smiling anxious faces look strained and very
white;
And over where my heart is, twelve thousand miles away,
The dewy grass is glinting at the break of day.

LONDON.

RIDING RHYME

Mount, mount in the morning dew;
A man loved me when the world was new.

Ride, ride while the dawn is cool:
I was angry and he was a fool.

Ride, ride through the shadows grey:
I told him to go and he went away.

Ride, ride through the sun's first gold;
I go alone now the world is old.

Ride, ride, for your horse is good;
He never came to me or understood.

Ride, ride, and you'll travel far;
I tore my heart out and hid the scar.

RIDING RHYME

Ride with a man at your bridle-rein—
My man never will come again.

Ride, ride, for the sun is strong:
O but a lonely road can be long!

Ride, ride, for the light grows dim:
What of the others? I wanted him.

Home, home, for the tale is told:
I was young and now I am old.

FOUR TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GERMAN

I

(Writer unknown)

I HEARD a sickle sighing,
Yea, sighing through the corn,
I heard a maiden crying
That was for love forlorn.

"Give over, love, give over!
I care not what may pass,
For in the green, green clover
I've found another lass."

"If in the green, green clover
The while I stand apart
You've found another lover
I well may break my heart."

II

(*Keller*)

I was a master-weaver
  To weave my grief and care,
And day and night I fashioned
  A heavy robe to wear.

I trailed it on the highway
  Dust-grey, with weary pride,
I set upon my forehead
  A wreath of thorns beside.

The sun on high in Heaven
  Looked down and loud laughed he:
" What little dwarf goes yonder
  In robes of majesty? "

Ashamed I laid my mantle
And crown upon the sod,
And sorrowless and joyless
The dusty road I plod.

III

(*Storm*)

Out of my slumber I woke in affright;
Why does the lark sing so deep in the night?

The day is gone, the morning is far,
Down on my pillow shines many a star;

And ever the song of the lark I hear;
Oh, voice of the dawning, I shrink in fear.

IV

(*Hofmannsthal*)

She bore the beaker o'er to him—
Her chin was rounded like its rim—
So light and steady was her tread,
Not one drop of the wine was shed.

So light and sinewy his hand,
He rode his young horse carelessly,
And with an easy mastery
He forced it to a quivering stand.

And yet when from her hand the light
Small beaker he must take, they found
That it was all too hard, for lo,
Both he and she did tremble so
Their two hands never met aright,
And dark wine trickled on the ground.

CHÂTEAU D'ESPAGNE

Castle-of-Spain is builded high,
Thrusting its towers towards the sky,
With its shot-windows looking down
Over the ribbed roofs of the town
That like a cat, her mousing done,
Stretches at ease there in the sun.

Castle-of-Spain upon the crest
Thrones like an eagle come to rest;
Shut wings ready to spread once more
And great and still in the blue to soar:—
On that day you will turn to find
Your castle gone with no wrack behind!

Castle-of-Spain is hard to take.
Your feet will bleed and your heart may break

CHÂTEAU D'ESPAGNE

Long ere that stony height you gain—
Better the safe and pleasant plain!
For, reach the summit, nothing's there
Save mocking sun and empty air
Or a tall cloud-tower in the heaven's span—
Small comfort that to an earthly man!
Castle-of-Spain is builded high
Up above us, beyond the sky. . . .

Easy we build you, hardly we gain,
Castle-of-Spain, Castle-of-Spain!

San Pablo, Andalusia.

BATHING RHYME

Turquoise-green the laughing sea
And the beach is ivory,
Creamy-yellow, creamy-smooth—
How the small waves lisp and soothe!
Those grave woods will not betray,
All the shore is ours to-day,
There's no soul for many a mile
And the curved waves call and smile,
Coax and whisper and beguile . . .
Quick, your garments cast aside
Go to meet the rising tide!

Childlike run we hand in hand
Down the slope of hard smooth sand,
From the kissing sun's embrace
To the kissing waves that race

BATHING RHYME

Frothing rainbows round our feet—
O the cool shock sharp and sweet!
O the healing of the sea,
Clearer than it seemed to be!
Even clearer—lucent green
Like the eyes of some sea queen.

Looking through the water's shimmer
Can you see a moving glimmer
Whiter than the rippled sand,
White as snow—a beckoning hand?
Dive, and lo! it swings from sight,
Vanishing in broken light.
She is gone, but memories stay
And transfigure all the day;
In the waves' soft touch there lingers
Something of her cool white fingers;
Is that shell her gleaming throat,
That dark weed, her hair afloat? . . .
So her troubling beauty's power

BATHING RHYME

Like the perfume of a flower
Penetrates the sea and air
Making everything more fair:
Pleasure stabbing to the brain
With the joy that touches pain.

Of the water's strength made free,
We're a part of all the sea;
Close its clean caress enfolds,
And each joy that motion holds
Taste we—glad to be alive—
Race the curling waves, or dive
To green dusk, and meet the day
Swift before has passed away
All our crystal pathway thick
With the bubbles rising quick;
Or when that is done we lie
Rocking, gazing at the sky,
Blue and sweet and purely lit
That we gasp to look on it. . . .

BATHING RHYME

Looking through the sunshot deep,
Where our sea-maid lies asleep,
Throat upflung, as white as lime,
With the clear waves keeping time
To the heaving of her breast—
Here we see to veil her rest
Every jewel-tint of green:
Jade, smaragdus, tourmaline,
Beryl and green sapphire's light,
Streaky solid malachite,
Chrysoprase and peacock-sheen
Of the opal's shifting green—
Patched and barred with purple dye
Where the rocks like watch-dogs lie,
Waiting crouched beneath the wave,
Hungry, cruel as the grave. . . .

Colour floods our souls until
They must brim and overspill,

BATHING RHYME

Cups too small to bear away
Half the beauty of the day.
But when walking bound with heat
Shackled in the airless street,
When the sky has lost its light
And o'er all the dust is white—
We shall turn to dreams of this
As a damned soul thinks of bliss,
And the loveliness we fail
Now to grasp shall count full tale.

MONTORO'S SONG AGAINST COUNT ALVARO DE LUNA, HIGH CONSTABLE OF CASTILE

(*From the Spanish of E. Marquina*)

" KING, a flock is feeding
down the cliff unheeding
and upon the hill,
with your crook to shepherd it. . . ."
—It is yours, O Favourite.
Ask for what you will.

" In your crown a jewel
blazes fierce and cruel—
kingship to fulfil.
Such a royal stone is it. . . ."
—It is yours, O Favourite.
Ask for what you will.

" King, see, your rejected
sceptre lies neglected
on the throne-steps still.
Long you have forgotten it. . . ."
—It is yours, O Favourite.
Ask for what you will.

" King, in kingly measure
I have spent my treasure,
haste my stores to fill!
Be my Envoy leal and fit—"
—I shall do so, Favourite.
Ask for what you will.

" King, tell me I am dreaming;
I see the tapers gleaming;
a scaffold boding ill
with the headsman swart by it—"
—It is yours, O Favourite,
ask for what you will.

SEA-FOG

Into the soft mist the fishing-boats go,
As silent as moonlight, as silent as snow;
Just where the pale sea melts into the sky,
Silver-grey birds of the autumn, they fly
Slowly and smoothly and statelily past
Till their wide pinions are hidden at last.

From the high rock whence I watch on the hill
Down to the sea, all is muffled and still.
Never a leaflet stirs soft overhead,
Everything living is frozen or fled,
Fled through the mist to more wonderful things. . . .
Am I the only soul left without wings?

Penzance.

SORROW

My Sorrow, O my Sorrow, when first you came to rest
Crouched huddling on my hearthstone, I held you to my breast
And cuddled and caressed you, and rocked you o'er and o'er—
My Sorrow like a baby that creeps upon the floor!

I showed you to my neighbours, I made you rhymes to sing,
For I was proud to own you, the delicate small thing;
And so I nursed you always, till you are grown to-day,
My Sorrow, like a tiger tense-crouching for his prey.

Yea, silently and swiftly, my Sorrow, you have grown
Till you are waxed so dreadful I dare not be alone—
Alone I dare not face you, lest I be slain outright—
I pray you, monster Sorrow, to sheathe your claws to-night!

SEAGULL

O THAT these words of mine,
  Leaden and dull,
Shone as your feathers shine,
  Swift-racing gull;

Sped like your arrow-flight,
  Flashing between
All the wide heaven's light
  And the waves' green!

Is it the wind's caress
  Bears you along,
Your white wings motionless,
  Delicate, strong?

SEAGULL

No, in a moment more
  Down the steep air
You shoot and whirl and soar,
  Effortless there.

Facing the wind you go,
  Splendid and free,
Dark on the sky you show,
  White on the sea.

Now to the waves you swoop,
  Snatch at your prey—
Smoothly you pause and stoop,
  And are away,

While the sea's rage is spent
  Leaping at you,
Who make high merriment
  Up in the blue.

Then to her calming breast
That pulses still
You will come down to rest
At your wild will.

O for the shining word
Swift as the light,
Showing you, gladdest bird,
Angel of flight!

THE TEMPLE PRESS, PRINTERS, LETCHWORTH

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

50m-7,'69(N296s4)—C-120

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 549 702 9

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
THIS BOOK CARD

THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA · LOS ANGELES

University Research Library

CALL NUMBER
SER
VOL
P

PR6025 M1848W

GLOBE 42145-0